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as though you can separate them, but the truth incarnate expressing itself to you through man.

Truth and life travel together in preaching. He who said, 'I am the truth,' also said 'I am the life.' In Him we have the eternal illustration of the power of truth in life. In a measure that has to be reproduced in all who are really preaching. Of course it is a very different thing from lecturing or discussing things with the congregation. That does not concern us. Our business is uttering the Word of God.

Alexander, J.R.



## A GREAT ADVENTURE IN THE VALLEY OF THE NILE

By REV. J. R. ALEXANDER, D.D.

EGYPT—habitable Egypt—is a narrow valley, in the widest part of the Delta about 100 miles across, south of Cairo to Aswan averaging only 8 to 10 miles in width. All else is desert, barren, uninhabited. From Alexandria to Aswan the distance is about 750 miles. Yet in this narrow valley of less than 13,000 square miles 14,000,000 people live, nearly 1,100 to the square mile, perhaps more thickly populated than any other country in the world. The people are mostly descendants of the ancient Egyptians, the sons of the Pharaohs, the builders of the wonderful temples and monuments and tombs which yet bear witness to the surpassing “wisdom of the Egyptians.”

The dwellers on the Nile during the first four centuries of the Christian era became Christian, some from conviction but many by force. But in the seventh century the armies of the khalifs conquered Egypt, and the people gradually accepted the religion of their conquerors, until today 13,000,000 of them are followers of the Prophet of Arabia, and mosque and minaret have taken the place of church and cross.

However, a remnant of the church of Egypt still remains, known as the Orthodox Coptic Church, numbering less than 800,000 adherents. In 451 A.D. the Coptic Church separated from “the Holy Catholic Church” and denounced it as heterodox, holding that Christ has but one nature, the divine, this being the first



great schism in the church universal, and it persists to the present day.

During the centuries the Coptic Church dwindled through apostasies and persecutions. Its wealth disappeared, its schools were closed, its churches were destroyed or turned into mosques. Social deprivations, political and civil disabilities, and oppressions of all sorts were inflicted upon clergy and people. And within the church itself the clergy became uneducated and ignorant; preaching the Gospel in their churches ceased, except the occasional reading of a homily of one of the church fathers, notably Chrysostom, as did the study of God's Word. Superstitions increased; they worshiped the Virgin, the saints, the martyrs, even their bones; they observed feasts and fasts which together occupied almost seven months of the year; liturgy, ritual, ceremonies, customs, confession, vestments, orders, decrees of councils took the place of the Gospel and of the life of faith and obedience in Jesus Christ.

The church not only did not give the Bible to its Moslem neighbors and the heathen tribes to the south, but it practically lost it for itself. Although the language of the country and of the people had become Arabic, the church held to the language of their fathers, and its services were conducted in an unknown tongue—a dead language in a dead church. For thirteen centuries the church sank ever deeper in lifeless formalism, ritualism, and monasticism, so that she and her priests and bishops, while perhaps not all irredeemably hopeless, had only a name to live while dead to everything spiritual and saving. She had become so corrupt in doctrine and moribund in life, so destitute of the means of revival—no Bible, no preachers, no teachers—that she had lost the will to spend or to be spent in the work

of the Gospel, to make disciples among those who were not Christians, or even to edify her own people in the life of faith and holiness and in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Every year, even to the present year, she has been disintegrating, her members falling away to Islam. She had become not only stagnant, decadent, but her clergy became violently antagonistic to reform, a handicap to God's Word and work, a stumbling block to the progress of His Kingdom.

The Moslems were full of the pride of their conquering power and of their great creed, "There is no God but God." In 1854 there was no way of approach to them with the Gospel. They superciliously declared that they knew Christianity and that it was only a form of heathenism, that it worshiped three gods, one of whom was a woman, that it was not worthy of a place in a sane man's consideration as a satisfaction for his soul or his intellect.

They rejected the Bible as changed, falsified; they frequently tore its leaves and threw it on the ground in contempt. For thirteen centuries they had despised Christianity and hated Christians as infidels, accursed. A most contemptuous curse for a donkey was to call him a Nazarene. The law of apostasy was in full force, and it is not yet abrogated. Does not God command his Prophet: "If they [Mohammedans] turn back, then seize and kill them wheresoever ye find them"? Baidhawi, the great Moslem commentator, says this passage means: "Whoever [any Moslem] turns back from his belief, openly or secretly, take him and kill him, wherever you find him, like any other infidel. Do not accept intercessions." A very few years previous to 1854 a woman had been thrown into the Nile because she had professed Christianity.



The first attempt in modern times to evangelize Egypt was made by the Moravian Brethren in the middle of the eighteenth century. For over thirty years they labored and suffered in Cairo and other parts of the country. The great Bible societies had not then been established, and the churches had not yet caught the vision of the Kingdom.

Forty years afterwards the Church Missionary Society began work in Cairo with the special object of reforming the Coptic Church from within and fitting it to evangelize Egypt. About the middle of the nineteenth century, after over thirty years of earnest labor, they, too, ceased work, leaving on record their conviction that this method of missionary effort was a failure and would always be a failure.

In 1854 the American Mission undertook to preach the Gospel to the people of Egypt. This mission is under the care of the United Presbyterian Church of America. There then seemed no way to accomplish the reform of the Coptic Church or the evangelization of the proud and arrogant Mohammedans. The door had been closed to direct evangelistic work among them through either individual contacts or general meetings.

These were the religious conditions in Egypt in 1854, under which the American Mission began the work.

#### THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN EGYPT

The missionaries of the American Mission began their work with preaching and teaching and Bible distribution on the streets of Cairo. They approached individuals; they opened meetings. The Moslems refused to hear, but many of the Copts heard the Word of God gladly, and although they were anathematized and excommunicated by their ignorant, fanatical clergy, they

searched the Scriptures and believed. Because of their excommunication they were deprived of the services of their clergy, they were cut off from the Lord's table, they received no church sanction for the marriage of their sons and daughters or church comfort at the burial of their dead, in a number of cases burial was refused them in their old family cemeteries. They appealed to the missionaries for relief and guidance. They could not go back into their old churches as sheep without a shepherd, with no Bible teaching, nor help in the Christian life; they would be without God and without hope. The missionaries gathered them into Gospel societies, taught them and their families the Scriptures, helped them to practice the life of faith and love in Jesus, and then on the last Sabbath of 1859, after five years of testing and teaching, the first Protestant communion in Egypt was held in Cairo and those counted worthy were formally received into the church of Jesus Christ.

These experiences convinced the missionaries that a living Christian church must be built up in Egypt and that through it God would reform the Coptic Church, evangelize the Moslems, and save Egypt. Four years later, then, the little band in Cairo was organized into a church with a session of four members, two Egyptians, one Syrian, and one Armenian. This was the origin of the Evangelical Church in Egypt.

Egypt is divided politically into fourteen provinces. The Evangelical Church has congregations and workers in thirteen of the fourteen provincial capitals, the fourteenth being occupied by another mission. It occupies Alexandria and Port Said, the two great ports of Egypt, and Aswan, the gateway to the Sudan. In Alexandria there is a large self-supporting church, with two or three mission stations in the city. In Cairo there



are eight organized churches with pastors, six of which are self-supporting, and five other mission centers in different parts of the city are rapidly approaching the organization stage. In Port Said, at the entrance to the Suez Canal, a congregation has been gathered. Its pastor and people have secured a lot and are engaged in the erection of a church with schoolrooms and a pastor's residence attached.

In Assiut Province, one out of every three towns and villages contains an Evangelical Church or meeting or school. The congregation of the city of Assiut consists of 575 communicants and several hundred adherents. It possesses a large building, is entirely self-supporting, and counts amongst its members some of the wealthiest Christians of Egypt. At Nakheilah, twenty miles south of Assiut, is a church of about 600 communicants. This congregation is just completing a splendid new building that will seat a thousand worshippers. It is, of course, self-supporting and is the center of evangelical work in many of the surrounding villages. In Luxor there is a growing self-supporting congregation with its new building on the road between the old temple of Luxor and the ruins of Karnak. On the opposite side of the river among the old tombs and not far from Tut-Ankh-Amen's splendid mausoleum there is a small congregation in the townlet of Kurneh. At the first cataract, in Aswan, there is a self-supporting congregation with its own building and pastor.

There are not many towns of ten thousand and above, in all the country, especially in Upper Egypt, in which there are not members of the Evangelical Church, or an Evangelical worker. The work of the church is being carried on in 325 stations and centers in Egypt, covering the country from the Mediterranean to the

First Cataract. From these centers the work through Bible and tract, teaching and preaching, is extending each year to the neighboring villages.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

In 1860 the ordained missionaries in Egypt were formed into a presbytery by the authority of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church, and named the Presbytery of Egypt, its boundaries being those of the Valley of the Nile. This presbytery grew until in 1899 it was divided into four presbyteries, organized into the Synod of the Nile. Later the mission in the Sudan having been established and a church having been organized in Khartum, the Presbytery of Thebes was divided, the part lying in the Egyptian Sudan being erected into the Presbytery of the Sudan, the southern boundaries of which are undefined. The Synod of the Nile, therefore, consists of these five presbyteries, all lying in the Valley of the Nile. The synod is not famous for its width geographically, but as to length it is probably the longest in the world, extending from the Mediterranean Sea to, say, the great lakes in Central Africa. It has members and people who were lately naked black savages on the Sobat and Upper Nile, others who were forced into Islam by the Mahdi in the nineties, as well as educated Egyptians, Syrians, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews. The language of the Presbytery of Egypt was the English. But in 1870, when Egyptian presbyters had been ordained, the Arabic was made the official language, and the records of the presbyteries and of the synod are kept in that language.

The ordained missionaries remained members in the presbyteries and the synod. But the Egyptian ministers and elders, in accordance with Presbyterian polity,



were placed on complete equality with the missionaries ecclesiastically. In three of the presbyteries the missionary members have never exceeded three or four in number, while the Egyptian members have been six to twenty times as many. In the synod the Egyptian members are six times as numerous as the missionaries. The missionary acts chiefly as adviser and helper. From his wider knowledge of the Christian church and its work in other lands he is able to suggest methods of work in the churches and to help his Egyptian brethren to higher ideals in Christian life and effort. Especially is he in a position to urge upon them their calling and opportunity to be the evangelizers of Egypt and the saviors of their own countrymen. The great prophecies concerning Egypt appeal mightily to them, and the promises that "the Egyptians shall know the Lord" help them greatly in their difficulties and disappointments, and fire some of the younger men with a hope and a zeal that their fathers did not know.

A great handicap to the Evangelical Church is the religious environment in which it is placed. On the one hand the formalism and dead ecclesiasticism of the orthodox churches, their want of missionary interest, their lack of evangelistic effort, or even of a consciousness of a need of a new life in Christ, their view of the church as a mere means of position and livelihood, all have a deadening reaction on the ministry and membership of the Evangelical Church. Then the religious leaders of the Mohammedan hierarchy are so destitute of what Christians have been taught to consider piety and spirituality, so satisfied with their positions and their scholastic learning and their forms, and so proud of their creed and Prophet, that they furnish no example to the Evangelical ministry or people. And most discouraging of all,

the Evangelical Church of Egypt is shut up in its narrow valley. It has no contact or intercourse with evangelical Christians of other countries and races. With mountains and deserts to the east and west of them, the wide Mediterranean to the north, and the heathen tribes of Africa to the south, they never meet with their brethren of other lands, and are unacquainted, except through books and papers, with Christian life and work and experience among other peoples. A very few of them have attended the World Sunday School conventions in Jerusalem, in Rome, and last year in Glasgow when nearly a dozen of our people were able to be present, among them a couple of young women. They were able to bring back something of the life and spirit of the convention and of the Christian workers whom they met, but this will not permeate greatly the church of Egypt and its people. Yet, notwithstanding this isolation, and these local handicaps, the Egyptian church has imbibed and is exemplifying much of the spirit of Jesus.

It is a missionary church, although yet in its infancy, and is earnestly endeavoring to carry the Gospel to its fellow countrymen and to those beyond. It is well organized for work and is each year becoming more efficient. The synod carries on the work of the church through seven large committees, on finance, home missions, work in the Sudan, work among Moslems, relief of infirm workers, Sabbath School, and a synodical committee.

From the beginning the mission resolved that the Evangelical Church, while receiving help from the mission funds in its infancy and need, should steadily aim at entire self-support financially, and independence administratively and ecclesiastically. The mission desired to raise up an Egyptian national church doing the work



of the Gospel in the evangelization of the people of Egypt. The church in Egypt has splendidly responded to the vision of the mission. The effort at first was to secure the self-support of individual congregations, that they might provide their own grounds, church buildings, pastors' salaries, and other expenses, then that these self-supporting churches should unitedly endeavor to help the weaker congregations and the mission stations.

The Home Mission Committee provides workers for the mission stations, whether organized or not organized, to direct the work in hand and extend it into new districts. In connection with the home mission work a special committee has charge of an effort to follow up the Egyptians, many of them Protestants, who have gone to the Sudan in the civil service or as clerks or settlers. Workers sent for this purpose labor under the oversight of the Presbytery of the Sudan.

A still more interesting development of the missionary effort of the church in Egypt is an attempt to establish a definite and special work to reach Moslems with the Gospel of salvation. During the centuries of subjection to their Moslem rulers, Christians of Egypt have suffered all that the enemies of the faith have inflicted on the people of the Book in every land. The law guaranteed them no personal rights, they were practically serfs, they were exposed to all sorts of disabilities, they lived on the sufferance of their Moslem neighbors and rulers. The history of Egypt from the seventh century to the nineteenth is one long sad record of indignities and persecutions inflicted on the Christians. And these indignities and disabilities have continued to the present day. Never had a Christian dared to present a Bible or to preach Christ to a Moslem. To persuade our Evangelical people to attempt efforts for the evangeli-

zation of their Moslem countrymen was no easy task. The memories of past and present indignities and cruelties and hatred and injustice were strong. Fear and doubt overcame their desire and their faith. But the memories and experience of the love of their Lord, His memorable Sermon on the Mount, the urging and example of the missionaries, and news of what the Gospel was doing for Moslems in other lands finally gave them courage. They have a special preacher, a converted Moslem layman, at work in Cairo, and the synod has resolved to open such work also in Tanta.

The Sabbath School Committee works in connection with the agent of the World's Sunday School Association for the Near East, whose central office is in Cairo. There are 245 Sabbath Schools under the oversight of this committee, with 20,938 scholars and 928 teachers and officers. This committee provides lesson leaflets for all the schools and a children's weekly paper. The annual expense of these publications is provided from the contributions of the Sabbath Schools, which in 1923 amounted to \$6,651. The committee also conducts presbyterial and regional Sabbath School conventions during the year, attended by both men and women, from whom the speakers on the program are selected. In Alexandria, Cairo, and other towns street Sabbath Schools for children who spend the day on the streets are held.

Another committee has charge of the publications authorized by the synod, the statistics, etc.

These committees make annual reports to the synod, and their reports and recommendations form the chief subjects of the deliberations of that body. In the presbyteries corresponding committees are correlated with those of the synod.



There are 107 organized congregations, with contributions of \$110,500. Fifty-five churches and pastorates are entirely self-supporting. The entire expenditure of the synod for its pastorates and mission stations, its buildings and workers, in 1923 was \$118,500. The church in Egypt provided of this sum \$110,500. The synod is nearly self-supporting; it received in 1923 from the mission and the church in America only \$7,500. The mission's policy and hope appear to be vindicated by the blessing of God on the Egyptian church.

#### OTHER GREAT AND EFFECTIVE AGENCIES

It is a matter of thanksgiving that the Bible is in the Arabic in a translation acceptable to Moslem scholars. Through the various activities of the Evangelical Church and its people the reading of the Bible is being greatly popularized. In its many editions and bindings it is easily acquired and easily carried. It is God's Word to all, and commands attention from all earnest minds. The high spirituality of the teachings and lives of its prophets and evangelists, the deep experiences of the souls of its psalmists and poets, and above all the wonderful teachings of Jesus who spake as never man spake, appeal to Moslems as well as to Christians.

The schools and colleges that are under the care of the Evangelical forces in Egypt are distinctly religious and missionary. As intellectual centers they are inferior to none in the country. They are crowded with the best class of pupils and students in Egypt. In public examinations their students rank among the highest; in moral and altruistic attainments they outrank all others.

The object of these schools, even the primary ones, as evangelistic agencies is fourfold:

“(1) *Permeation*:—to permeate the young people of the Muslem and Oriental Christian Communities with the evangelical Christian ideas and ideals, and to develop in as many of them as possible, an earnest, Christian character, and to instill in them true Christian morality.

“(2) *Conversion*:—to win the young men and women in Egypt to Christ and to Christianity, to persuade them to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, to conserve to the Church its own children and to gather into it others so as to build up and extend the Reformed Church in Egypt.

“(3) *Workers*:—to prepare those of them to whom it is given to become co-workers with the Lord and with us in evangelizing the people of Egypt, to help in building up an Evangelical Christian Church served by trained Egyptian Christian workers.

“(4) *Training for Citizenship*:—to promote the general welfare of the Community in providing men and women with a better moral and intellectual and social outlook than is given elsewhere, by giving them a higher and nobler purpose in life, by training the girls and young women in Christian refinement and to become more effective home-makers and housekeepers—to make all to be more useful citizens in the service of their country and of their Church.”

In many cases the school has been the founder of the church. All the pastors and evangelical workers and teachers, men and women, have been trained in these schools.

Among the special efforts of the church for the deepening of spiritual life is the conducting of a prayer conference each year. It is in the care of a committee ap-



pointed by synod. Its speakers and their subjects are carefully chosen and its exercises and opportunities for prayer have had an uplifting influence on the church and its leaders. The conference has been in existence for over twenty years. It is attended by hundreds each year and appears to appeal to the workers and leaders, especially the younger men, more heartily year by year. The women of the church, their workers and leaders, cooperate in this conference. A day of its sessions is especially for the women; during the other days they have separate meetings. Under the auspices of the mission there are held each year presbyterial and regional conferences for Bible study and inspirational purposes. The women also share in these meetings. The object is to reach the church membership in a large way by having the meetings occur in different localities near the church centers. These meetings are under the oversight of the mission's evangelistic committee assisted by the Egyptian leaders in each locality in which the conference meets. These conferences and meetings have been found very helpful in enlarging the vision of the leaders, providing ideals of Christian life and work, and quickening the spiritual and prayer life of all. They are our Northfields and Keswicks, for Egypt.

While these general and special annual prayer conferences are held publicly, every effort is made privately and socially to preserve the individual spiritual life and cultivate it in the home and the church. Very little effort is made in the Oriental churches to train their people in Christian life and work. They are satisfied with their forms and their "orthodoxy." They tattoo the cross on their wrists and by that sign they are known to be Christians. It is seldom that family worship is practiced among them. But it is the earnest effort of

the Evangelicals to have each family meet daily for Scripture reading and prayer, and very many families do so. The effect in their religious and spiritual betterment is marked. In each church and congregation there is a weekly meeting for congregational prayer and conference. In many places there are two or three meetings weekly. Such meetings are largely for evangelistic purposes. The Scriptures are read and explained and men are urged to accept Jesus as their Saviour and to practice the better life. It is the women in Egypt, as in all the East, who have been especially neglected. In all the Evangelical congregations there is a special meeting for the women and girls. The Scriptures are read and explained, the Psalms are sung and committed to memory, and the women pray and lead in prayer together.

The Egyptians, young men and older men, love to frequent the coffee houses in the evenings. There they pass the time in idle gossip and in games and are tempted to engage in less innocent practices. In Evangelical communities Christian Endeavor Societies have been organized. These have been found an effective means of helping the young men and women. The drinking habit and the sale of liquors is on the increase in Egypt. The trade is fostered mostly by foreigners. Even the Mohammedans are in large numbers learning to drink beer and all sorts of intoxicants. Efforts are being made through temperance societies and public lectures to show the evils of drink. The first temperance society was formed in Assiut College over thirty years ago, and the strongest prohibition organization in Egypt is the Evangelical Church. Very few of its people, young or old, drink.

One of the most hopeful and fruitful movements in



the church is that of the elders and laymen. They have formed an organization, a branch of which is rapidly being established in every congregation, with the special object of quickening the spiritual life of the church and leading it to assume self-support. One of the methods employed is to urge each member to dedicate himself and at least a tithe of his or her income to the Lord and His work. A great deal of interest is taken in this movement, and the church is making steady progress toward financial independence.

#### SOURCES AND INTELLIGENCE OF THE MEMBERSHIP

The church members represent all classes of the Egyptian people. The sons of the millionaire, the well-to-do, the poor, and the former slave, form parts of the Evangelical community. Among them are landowners, merchants, farmers, peasants, servants, lawyers, doctors, teachers. Through these representatives of the different grades of society and of the various activities and vocations of the country, the Gospel is being continually recommended to the people.

In the last census of Egypt it is shown that the literacy of the Protestant community is far greater than the average for all Egypt, and much superior to that of the Moslems or of the Copts. These figures are on the basis of the number of literates per thousand:—

In all Egypt, including foreigners. Males, 137; females, 21; average, 79.

By religions, Egyptians only. Moslems: Males, 99; females, 6; average, 53. Copts: Males, 261; females, 80; average, 171. Protestants: Males, 431; females, 232; average, 332.

These figures were gathered in 1917 when the means for accuracy were imperfect. In view of the large ex-

tension of education during the past eight years the averages are now much higher, and it is believed that Protestant education has fully maintained its superiority.

The Evangelical Egyptian, whether man or woman, represents a type of citizenship that is unique in Egypt. He stands for keeping the Lord's Day holy, for temperance, for the Bible and the Bible only in religion, for education for both sexes to a greater and a broader degree than others, for religious freedom, for the education and uplift of woman and of the family. His moral and civic standards are higher than others. It is remarkable that, although there are only a few Christians in the new Parliament, yet in the House where there are fifteen Christian members, six of them are sons of our Evangelical people, and in the Senate there are four Evangelicals, one chosen by election and the others by appointment of the King.

#### THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE PROTESTANT COMMUNITY

In Egypt, as in other parts of the old Turkish Empire, the Protestant community administers its own laws in matters that concern what is known as "personal status." This phrase refers to all matters of inheritance, marriage, divorce, rights of minors, etc. About forty years ago the missionaries, especially Dr. Lansing, succeeded in obtaining a firman from the reigning Sultan in accordance with which the Khedive of Egypt and his courts recognized the Protestant community in Egypt, especially the Evangelical people, as a Christian body entitled to the privileges of this legal provision. The Ministry of Justice granted a code for the use of the community, to be administered by a council composed of members chosen by the community. Since then the



president of this council and its leading members have been members of the Evangelical Church. The decisions of this council when called in question have hitherto been sustained by the government Department of Justice. This legal standing adds greatly to the comfort and the prestige of the Protestant community. The religious organizations formed by the other missions in Egypt have mostly given their adherence to the council.

### THE MINISTRY

The living ministry of the Evangelical Church consists of 98 ordained men, 24 licentiates, 12 theologues, and 134 presbyterial trained workers. Of these 79 are in the pastorate and 19 without charge. The ministers "without charge" are all in the work in some capacity; two are evangelists in the Sudan Presbytery, one is in charge of the religious work in Assiut Hospital, another is a reader and corrector in the Nile Mission Press, another is a teacher of Bible in Assiut College, and still another is a professor in our mission seminary, and another the Presbyterial Evangelist of the Delta Presbytery. There are 38 lay workers under the care of synod. An elder is the assistant editor of the church paper, the *Huda*, and assistant to the secretary of the World's Sunday School Association in the Near East.

Except the lay workers, these men are, all but one, graduates of our Assiut College. The ministers have all been trained in our theological seminary at Cairo. Many of them are men of superior ability, as is evidenced by the large congregations they have built up. They are of the intellectual rather than of the emotional type. They stand high in the estimate of the people of their communities and are leaders in local civic and public interests as well as in religious work. There is

no other Christian community in Egypt that has such a large, well-qualified, able ministry as the Evangelical Church. They are Bible scholars and Bible preachers, and are loyal, earnest Protestants devoted to the evangelization of their country. The minister who is synod's professor in our mission seminary is unique in his learning. He reads Hebrew as readily as Arabic, and has acquired a passable knowledge of English, French, and Greek. He has written an Arabic-Hebrew and an Arabic-Greek Manual for his students in the seminary.

The Synod of the Nile, feeling that it has almost reached its majority in ecclesiastical administration and in financial independence, has resolved to establish its own theological school. Its presbyteries furnish students annually, and it considers that among its ministers are "faithful men, able to teach" and to commit the oracles of God to others. The synod has resolved to locate its seminary in Cairo. It has purchased a desirable lot in the city and is collecting money with which to erect the necessary buildings.

One of the mission bodies working in Egypt is the Egypt General Mission. Its field of effort lies in Lower Egypt. Its members are all laymen and it has resolved not to try to establish a separate native church. It has affiliated in its religious work with the Presbytery of the Delta of the Evangelical Church, so that its congregations and converts are organized as a part of that presbytery. Two of the ministerial members of the presbytery have been assigned to work in the Egypt General Mission district. One of these was born a Moslem and educated from a small boy by the Egypt General Mission, which later sent him to Assiut College and the seminary to complete his education. He was ordained by the Presbytery of the Delta for service as



an evangelist in this union field. This movement does not mean that the American Mission and the Egypt General Mission have in any sense united, but it may mean the beginning of a movement for the formation of one native Egyptian evangelical church.

#### INFLUENCE ON THE COPTIC CHURCH

The preceding pages show the adverse conditions in which the Evangelical Church began its work, and what it has accomplished. Its membership in Egypt and the Sudan is 17,300; in Egypt alone about 17,000. This membership represents a Protestant community of 45,000 to 50,000 persons. Its influence has reached all grades of society, all institutions of the country, educational, religious, social, political.

It has produced a most marked impression on the Coptic Church. It is removing the reproach that Egyptian Christianity has been to true Christianity. It has restored the Bible to the Christian communities of Egypt. When the work of the Evangelical Church was begun, but few of the people and their families possessed copies of the Scriptures. A copy was generally to be found in the old churches, written by hand. To-day, thanks to the help of the Bible Societies, there are but few, if any, Christian families in Egypt that do not possess a printed copy or copies of the Bible. Frequently men carry a copy of the New Testament with them.

The Evangelical Church, directly and indirectly, has made the Coptic community, next to itself, the best educated and most enlightened part of the population. Tens of thousands of the younger Copts, men and women, have been educated in Evangelical schools. In these schools they have learned the Scriptures and Scrip-

ture truth. Many of them have been born again in these schools. In imitation of the Protestants, the Copts themselves have opened schools. They have established a School of Religion in which to train preachers and priests. One of the professors in this school is a graduate of our Assiut College and our Seminary. The students procure Evangelical commentaries and religious books; there are very few others. One of their leaders is translating Matthew Henry's entire commentary. In former years there was no preaching, or very little, in the Coptic churches. Through these new preachers much Biblical knowledge and truth are being taught the people. Sabbath Schools are being established, and a Sabbath School lesson leaflet is being prepared under their direction for their schools. Special meetings for women are also being held in some places.

As an indirect result of evangelical teaching a remarkable movement is at work among the Copts, that is semi-evangelical. It is led by a priest who is a product of the modern schools of Egypt and well educated when compared with the average priest. He is a born preacher, with an unusual gift of oratory. He is thoroughly evangelical as to doctrine. He has publicly and persistently urged the Coptic hierarchy to undertake the reform of the church, to do away with the practices that have grown up during the centuries but have no New Testament basis, to revise and reform the liturgy and the services—to reform the doctrines of the church, to permit the priests, the bishops, the metropolitan, and the patriarch to marry. Crowds flock to hear him preach. But, true to form, the hierarchy not only refused all reform, but, accusing the priest of heresy, had him "silenced" and finally "unfrocked." He, however, continues to preach, and has a following of



several hundred families in Cairo and sympathizers throughout the country. He desires to affiliate with the Evangelical Church, but feels that union would injure the work he is doing among the people. And yet he is with us, because not against us. A bishop who has urged reforms has also been "unfrocked." Two other bishops have in a tactful and tentative manner suggested ways for the improvement of the clergy and the work of the church.

Through these various agencies a strong reformation is going on within the Coptic Church and among the Coptic people. It is largely a real reformation, and is directly traced to the impact of the Evangelical Church on the Coptic people. Thousands of them attend the preaching of the Evangelical pastors, besides the thousands that are annually in the schools and hospitals. The desire for reform is insistent in all parts of the church. When the present aged Patriarch is succeeded, it is expected that great reformatory changes will be inaugurated.

#### INFLUENCE ON ISLAM

The Gospel of Jesus has been also the power of God and the wisdom of God to the Moslem people of Egypt as well as to others.

When the missionaries in 1854 found no way of access to the Moslem heart or the Moslem mind, when a frontal approach seemed impossible, they opened schools for both boys and girls. In the schools the Bible was taught to every class. Its lessons were explained to the schools as a whole. Christian prayer was offered for the pupils and their parents and their people. The Old and New Testaments were studied and portions committed to memory. Moslems sent their children to the mission schools. Down through the decades each

year there have been from 1,000 to 3,500 Mohammedan boys and girls, young men and young women, in the mission and Evangelical schools.

Then, later, hospitals and clinics were opened, one in Assiut, the capital of Upper Egypt, the other in Lower Egypt, in Tanta, the largest city in the Delta. In these hospitals and clinics thousands of Moslem patients, male and female, are treated annually. Last year 6,499 Moslem patients spent from one week to four weeks, or longer, in the hospitals, and 31,808 Moslems were treated in the clinics. In both hospitals and clinics the Bible is read and explained, and prayer is offered for the patients. Often the condition of patients in the hospital becomes disgusting, and when the nurses patiently and tenderly care for the sufferers, they say: 'Why do you do this for us? We have never done it for you; we would not do such service for you.' They are then told of the Great Physician, and His love and care for men. Lately the head of a Moslem religious school was a patient for several weeks in one of the hospitals. He heard the Bible read for the first time in his life. On his recovery and discharge he bought ten large Bibles to take to his friends. There are, today, tens and scores of thousands of Moslems under sixty years of age who have learned in the schools and hospitals of Jesus and His Gospel of love for them. They carry their Testaments with them and read them to their friends. They tell what they have seen and heard and learned. They are evangelizing one another. The newspapers, too, make reference to what our Lord taught and even quote His words in support of their arguments. In many places Moslem children attend Sabbath Schools. They commit verses, chapters, and Psalms. They gain prizes



which are frequently copies of the Bible or New Testament.

The whole attitude of the Moslems of Egypt towards Christians and Christianity has changed. They receive the Scriptures gladly; they come to the houses of Christian workers to inquire about Christianity and its teaching; they attend church services and Christian religious meetings. In one of our churches, where the preacher was a converted Mohammedan, a graduate of the Azhar, hundreds of Moslems, professors and students of the Azhar, attended. Never before was it known in Egypt that Moslem scholars and teachers of religion would attend a Christian church to hear, quietly and attentively, one of their former coreligionists preach the Gospel of Christ. Great quantities of Christian tracts and books are annually distributed among the Mohammedans and eagerly read by them. For the first time the Moslems in Egypt are "hearing"—"how shall they believe in whom they have not heard?"

Funeral occasions have afforded opportunities for imparting Christian truth and the Christian hope. During a Christian funeral the Mohammedan neighbors pay visits of condolence. At such times the Christian preacher or teacher spends part of each day in reading the Scriptures and prayer for the comfort and edification of the mourners and their friends. When a Moslem neighbor is in mourning the Christians return the visits of condolence. It has occurred that the Moslem head of the house has said to the Christians: "Where is your book? Have you no word of comfort for us?" And then the Christian has read from the Bible and explained its hope and assurance of the life in glory at God's right hand, and that through Jesus, our Lord, this Gospel is for all the world, Moslems as well as others.

During the course of the years some two hundred Moslems have been baptized by our missionaries and Egyptian pastors. One of them, a bright young man, was taken to Edinburgh and educated in the University by the Earl of Aberdeen. He afterwards spent forty years as a Christian medical missionary at Amoy, China.

When we remember that only sixty years ago no Moslem would read the Scriptures or accept Christ, when even yet the law of apostasy is unchanged and it is hazardous for a Moslem to profess Christianity, when all along the years Coptic Christians were and are yet apostatizing to Islam, this change of attitude on the part of Moslems is wonderful in our eyes. The few that have professed their faith and been baptized are, we believe, but the pioneers of hosts to follow.

The new Constitution guarantees "absolute liberty of conscience," and declares that "the State will protect the full exercise of the rites of all religions and creeds." Will this provision make the work of evangelization easier?

#### GENERAL INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH

The influence of the Evangelical Church reaches far beyond its own borders. Before the advent of the mission and the Evangelical Church the Market Day in Egypt was the Lord's Day. It was the custom to hold on that day public markets in the provincial capitals and township centers to which the people in the vicinity brought whatever they wished to sell or exchange. This day was the great day of gain in the week, and the livelihood of many depended on their trade on this day.

But the Evangelicals wished to keep the Lord's Day as a day of rest, a sacred day devoted to attending church and practicing the presence of God by the read-



ing of His Word and prayer. They were always the minority, often a very small minority, of the people in any town. They felt that they neither could afford to lose the day as a day devoted to sacred things nor as a day of trade. They met together to consider the matter and turned to God in prayer, appealing to Him to honor His day by providing a way for their deliverance from temptation and loss. They prepared petitions to the local and the state authorities, asking that the Market Day might be changed to another day of the week. To their great joy many of their Coptic, Greek, and Moslem neighbors joined with them in their petitions. The authorities on investigation were persuaded of the reasonableness of their petitions and granted their request. The Market Day has been changed from the Sabbath to some other day in every large town and nearly every smaller town throughout the country.

The state schools of Egypt are all in session on the Sabbath. All the people of Egypt are taxed for their support, Christians as well as others. But earnest Christians cannot conscientiously send their children to school on the Lord's Day. They endeavored to persuade the Ministry of Education to make Sabbath a holiday in all the state schools or to excuse their children from attendance on that day. The Ministry could not see its way clear to do this, but it proposed to provide for the teaching of the Bible to Christian pupils on that day and to furnish the Bibles gratis. A partial concession only, it is true, but never before had the Moslem government of Egypt made such a concession. For several years the Ministry has obtained the Bibles required through the Mission Bookshop in Cairo.

When the new Parliament convened, at its first session, on the motion of a Moslem member of the Senate,

it was agreed that the sessions of that body would not be held on the Sabbath or on Saturdays out of courtesy to the Christian and Jewish members. This was accomplished at the tactful suggestion of some of the Protestant Senators.

The Evangelical Church is not perfect. Its environment is a great handicap. Its vision of the Kingdom, its spirituality, are greatly limited. Its sense of its duty and privilege to evangelize its Moslem neighbors and countrymen is not yet greatly compelling. Some of its leaders seem of the world, worldly. But strong influences are at work to hold it true to the Lord's great purpose for Egypt. Its younger men and women are feeling the call to carry the Gospel to the Mohammedans among whom they live. Two of the younger ministers have volunteered and are engaged in this great work. Others will follow. The church is blazing the trail, clearing the ground. It is planting the seed—the harvest will not fail, for “the Egyptians shall know the Lord.”

The Gospel through the Evangelical Church is permeating with tremendous effect the minds of the Moslem people with the ideals of Jesus. Millions of them do not think of Christ and of Christianity as their fathers did. They see the church living and working as Jesus taught. The Evangel is rapidly being distributed among them. They “know in part,” they are hearing, and some are believing. Will God's Word return unto Him void?

Does all this seem but little as the result of seventy years of effort? Frequently writers and speakers imply that missions in Moslem lands have toiled and taken nothing. Surely such a view is the outcome of a very superficial study of Islam, its doctrines and laws, its spirit and pride and power. Its truths appeal to men,



and its half-truths satisfy the average man, while its provisions for the gratification of the lower instincts and lusts of human nature give it the strongest kind of attraction to men. To overcome bigotry and the misconceptions and misunderstandings that have grown up and become fixed in the thoughts and beliefs of Moslems concerning Christianity during the past thirteen centuries cannot be eradicated or even largely mollified in a year or a few years. It will require decades before Christ's Name will be put above every name in their thoughts and lives. Should it be expected that in a short time Christianity presented by a few men and women, who must learn the language of Islam and its peoples, living in climates and conditions inimical to health and work, opposed often and never supported by their governments, would overcome the deep-rooted and assured conviction of the followers of Mohammed of the divine origin of their Koran?

We cannot tell what the future has in store in the way of disappointments to the Evangelical Church, temporary failures or possible persecutions. The enemies of our Lord and His Kingdom, in Egypt, are numerous, strong, confident, intolerant, backed by an unscrupulous hierarchy and a powerful government. Full liberty in religion is popularly and clerically denied, freedom to the individual to believe as his conscience dictates to him and to profess that belief publicly is refused. But whatever may be the difficulties of the future, the Evangelical Church faces them with courage, initiative, assurance, joy. "Thy Kingdom come," they pray, and the Kingdom is coming. It is only during the past twenty-five years that an adequate force of missionaries and Egyptian workers has been raised up, and only now that



the accumulated experience of the missionaries and Egyptian pastors and leaders has become available.

Islam has never been so moved by the claims of Christianity, whether in India, Java, or Egypt. During the seventy years of evangelical effort in Egypt the throne of Ismail Pasha has fallen, that of his grandson, Abbas II, has perished, the suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey has been repudiated, and the British protectorate has come to an end, but the Word of God is having free course and is being glorified. The Bible is in the language of the people, it is taught in the schools and the hospitals, read in the homes and the harems, preached in the churches and the Sabbath Schools, distributed on the streets of the cities, along the river and the canals, and carried to the most distant villages and hamlets.

An active, living evangelical and evangelistic church is in being, is expanding and growing strong, and is undertaking more and more earnestly her share in the work of the Kingdom. Great schools and colleges are filling the country with evangelical and enlightened men and women ready to assume their part in the activities of the country and of the Christian life. Prejudice is being overcome, bigotry is being broken down, and the ideas and ideals of Christ's Gospel are spreading like leaven in all parts of the valley, slowly transforming those who will receive it. What has been, what is, is an earnest of the coming of the time when the Lord, in speaking of Egypt, shall say: "Egypt my people."

CAIRO, EGYPT